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CONTENTS.

	PAGE
EDITORIALS	181-184
The Interparliamentary Conference at St. Louis — A New International Peace Conference — The Argument from the Horrors of War — The Opening of the Peace Congress.	
EDITORIAL NOTES	184-185
Noah Worcester's "Solemn Review" — The Mohonk Arbitration Clock.	
GENERAL ARTICLES:	
Address of Welcome on Behalf of the President to the Delegates to the Interparliamentary Conference at St. Louis, September 12, <i>Hon. Francis B. Loomis</i>	185-187
Speech of Dr. Albert Gobat, Secretary of the Interparliamentary Union, on Presenting to President Roosevelt the St. Louis Resolution	187-188
Proceedings of the Interparliamentary Conference at St. Louis.	188-190
A Solemn Review of War, <i>Noah Worcester, D. D.</i>	191-196
Cost of War and Warfare, <i>Edward Atkinson</i>	196-197

The Interparliamentary Conference at St. Louis.

The Conference of the Interparliamentary Union at St. Louis on the 12th, 13th and 14th of September was, in some of its aspects, the most significant peace event which has occurred since the meeting of the Hague Conference in 1899.

This Union, which was organized only fifteen years ago, at the time of the Paris Exposition of 1889, has grown beyond all expectation, and now has a membership of over two thousand, as we learn from its general secretary, Dr. Albert Gobat of Berne. That two thousand members and (a few) ex-members of the national legislatures of the civilized world should have associated themselves together for the sole purpose of promoting pacific relations and pacific methods of adjusting disputes among the nations is a fact the full import of which it is not easy to grasp. Such an association of two thousand sensible men of any kind would mean much. That these men are all statesmen, recognized in their several countries as competent to exercise the highest legislative functions, gives their Union a unique significance, and assures us that statesmanship has at last begun to understand its true mission and to realize its highest aims.

That this body of peace-making legislators should be in this country as the guests of our government, conducted about in two palatial trains and entertained in a munificent way wholly at the expense of the

government, seems a very natural and simple thing. But when before in human history did the national parliament of a first-class power vote as considerable a sum as fifty thousand dollars to provide entertainment for a body of unofficial visitors, whose whole business was that of laying the foundations of peace between the nations?

These are the considerations which give this meeting at St. Louis its extraordinary significance. The cause of peace has at last become the affair not of private individuals and peace societies only, but of the governments themselves and the national parliaments also. The prophecy of the distinguished French peacemaker a generation ago, that peace which was then walking neglected in humble attire in the streets would some day ride in state in the chariots of kings, is already being fulfilled.

It was an impressive spectacle when the Conference met for its opening session in the Festival Hall of the great Exposition. A large audience had gathered to witness the proceedings. Dr. Albert Gobat, the general secretary of the Union, arose and in a few simple words proposed for president of the Conference Hon. Richard Bartholdt, member of Congress from Missouri, on whose initiative the Arbitration Group of the United States Congress had been formed, and through whose sagacious and persistent efforts the meeting of the Conference in this country under the auspices of the government had been made possible.

After Mr. Bartholdt's brief address of welcome, in which a very high note was struck, Hon. Francis B. Loomis, First Assistant Secretary of State, welcomed the delegates in behalf of the government, in a very able speech, which we are glad to give our readers in this issue. After Mr. David R. Francis, president of the Exposition management, had extended a welcome in a graceful speech, on behalf of the managers, responses were made by a representative of each of the fourteen foreign countries participating in the Conference. Though these men used different tongues, they all spoke the same language. Much of the speaking was of a very high order and voiced the warm and growing interest in all parts of the civilized world in the pacific settlement of disputes and the maintenance of friendship and peace among the nations. The unity and community of interests of the nations was strongly emphasized. Mr. Tydeman of the Netherlands voiced the spirit of the Conference and aroused great enthusiasm when he declared

that "there is no longer any New World, or Old World, but only one world, the whole world."

The resolutions voted by the Conference we give in full on another page. They were in line with what has been done at previous meetings of the Union, though in certain respects they went further and were more urgent. The powers signatory of the Hague Conventions were urged to take steps to put an end to the horrible conflict now raging in the Far East, and the Interparliamentary Bureau at Berne was instructed to convey this resolution to the knowledge of the said governments. A resolution was adopted expressing deep satisfaction at what has been done the past year in the conclusion of special treaties of obligatory arbitration, at the general agreement between France and Great Britain for the disposal of all their colonial differences, and urging similar action upon other governments having differences pending. A revision of the laws of war was urged in the interests of the better protection of the commercial and navigation rights of neutrals.

The most important action of the Conference was its resolution unanimously and enthusiastically adopted, inviting the governments of the world to hold an international conference to dispose of the questions left over by the Hague Conference — arrest and reduction of armaments, etc. — to consider the matter of the general negotiation of treaties of obligatory arbitration, and to examine the question of the feasibility of creating *an international congress to meet periodically for the discussion of international questions*. The President of the United States was "respectfully and urgently requested to invite all the nations to be represented in such a conference."

Except that it consumed considerable time in debating the question of widening and strengthening the Interparliamentary Union, so as to increase its efficiency and bring into it parliaments like those of Japan and the South American republics, not now represented in its membership, the Conference wasted no time in academic discussions, but threw the whole weight of its influence into these few resolutions regarding matters of immediate and serious moment — the stopping of the Russo-Japanese war, reduction of armaments, extension of the scope of obligatory arbitration, protection of the rights of neutrals on the high seas, and the creation of a stated international congress for deliberation upon international questions.

Considering the circumstances of its meeting under the immediate auspices of the United States government, the influence of the Conference is certain to be large and almost immediate. We shall be greatly surprised if our government does not the coming winter, in response to the resolution above mentioned and others of like nature already before it, send out invitations to all the nations of the world to send representatives to a new conference to complete the

work left undone at The Hague, and to take under advisement the important question now commanding the attention of all publicists and students of international relations — the creation of an international congress as the counterpart and complement of the Hague Court.

A New International Peace Conference.

The members of the Interparliamentary Conference held at St. Louis last month, after visiting Denver, Chicago and Niagara Falls, completed their trip as the guests of the government on the 24th ult. by a visit to Washington and the presentation to President Roosevelt of the important resolution adopted at their meeting on the 13th ult. at St. Louis. The resolution is given on another page of this paper.

The presentation of the resolution to the President was made by Dr. Gobat, the Secretary of the Interparliamentary Union, in a brief but exceptionally fine speech. The President responded briefly and in a manner which pleased the visitors very much. The substance of his response was that he was in entire sympathy with the aims of the Interparliamentary Union, and that he would, as early as it could practicably be done, invite the governments of all the nations of the world to send delegates to an international conference to consider the subjects which had been suggested in the St. Louis resolution.

The importance of this determination of the President cannot be overestimated. The proposed conference will not be a new meeting of the Hague Conference, as has been imagined by some. That Conference ended its existence when its great work was done. The new Conference will of course be like the one of 1899 in many respects, but it will differ from it in being composed of representatives of all the nations of the world, as the one at The Hague was not. The work outlined for it will also be of much farther-reaching significance. It will be asked to consider at least three commanding subjects, — the arrest and reduction of the great armaments of the world, left over by the Hague Conference, the extension of the work and power of the Hague Court through a comprehensive system of treaties of obligatory arbitration, and the advisability of the *creation of a regular periodic congress of the nations*, — the beginnings, that is, of a political organization of the world.

This latter subject is now impressing itself powerfully upon all thoughtful students of international affairs. Our readers have already been made thoroughly acquainted with the idea. The resolution of the Massachusetts Legislature, adopted unanimously on the petition of the American Peace Society, asking Congress to authorize the President to invite the governments of the world to unite in creating an